



# Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

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Sergeant Phillip Bardin and Officer Allen Wilson

## Officers' quick response saves Lexington man

Gregory Labarge of Lexington remains in critical condition at the University of Louisville Hospital today, but it is likely things would have been more grave except for the quick actions of KDFWR Sergeant Phillip Bardin and Officer Allen Wilson.

Labarge, 47, suffered severe propeller cuts about 2 p.m. Sunday, August 5, in the Corbin Bend area of Green River Lake about a mile from Holmes Bend Marina in Adair County while riding a tube and the 17-foot Bayliner pulling him cut too sharply and struck him.

Bardin and Wilson arrived on the scene within a minute or two after the accident and found Dorothy Baker, 43, of Lexington, operator of the Bayliner, swimming toward Labarge. The two officers immediately saw evidence of a severe evisceration and bone-deep lacerations in his arm.

They lifted Labarge into their boat and raced back to the marina, radioing ahead for EMT assistance to meet them at the ramp. Labarge had suffered multiple propeller lacerations down his right side from his shoulder to his foot. The evisceration stretched across his lower abdomen to the kidney area.

They met off-duty paramedic Lewis Allen launching his own boat at the ramp. Doctor's assistant and nurse Stacy Smith was there as well. The medical personnel used bandages, tape and other supplies from the officers' first aid kit to help stem bleeding, stabilize organs and immobilize Labarge until the EMT unit arrived at the launch ramp.

Labarge was transported to Westlake Regional Hospital in Columbia and then air-lifted via AirEvac Medical Helicopter

## Some additional grade increases approved

Earlier this year, the Department submitted a proposal through the Commerce Cabinet to the Personnel Cabinet recommending that a number of our positions be increased in grade (and salary), based on survey analysis of like positions in fish and wildlife agencies from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

This attempt is directly in line with our Strategic Plan objective (5.3.e) "to increase employee salaries to be competitive with surrounding states' fish and wildlife agencies."

The grade increase proposal worked its way through the Commerce Cabinet, and with their support, was forwarded to the Personnel Cabinet in April of this year for their approval.

Since the original recommendation, the department has continued on a weekly basis to expedite and promote

**See "Increases," page 6.**

to U of L Hospital.

District law enforcement supervisor Lt. Todd Rogers called Bardin's and Wilson's quick actions "exemplary," and said, "There is no doubt that if they had not acted in such a quick and professional manner the victim's outcome would be grave."

After meeting Bardin and Wilson at Westlake Hospital, Rogers returned to the marina to clean the boat and equipment.

"While I was there, I had several people come up to me and commend Sgt. Bardin and Officer Wilson for their professionalism and their quick actions," said Rogers.

## Columns, press releases getting national play

Newspapers on the east coast, west coast, and several states in between have recently taken an interest in the department's press releases and new "Kentucky Afield Outdoors" columns. The releases, which run Mondays and Thursdays, and the columns, which run Thursdays, are not only appearing in Kentucky newspapers, but in out-of-state and online news outlets as well.

"As a national outdoor news service it's unusual to receive unsolicited release materials and features that are readily applicable to our national audience," said Jim Shepherd, editor of the online news outlets the Outdoor Wire, the Fishing Wire and the Shooting Wire. These outlets regularly pick up the columns and releases, resulting in their inclusion in several out-of-state newspapers and other online resources.

"The pieces I've received from Kentucky have fit right into our editorial philosophy and needs. They have been well-written, succinct, and contained useful information that a majority of our readers could find helpful. As our material is also heavily excerpted by national, regional and local news outlets looking to supplement their own material (or lack thereof) their useful information is communicated even further to the outdoor audience."

I & E writers Lee McClellan and Hayley Lynch started writing "Kentucky Afield Outdoors" May 31. The columns feature tips, news and perspectives on the outdoors. The Pocono Record in Pennsylvania, the Chattanooga in Tennessee and Fishing Florida Online Magazine recently featured

See "Columns," page 5.

## Richardson wins Georgia ASA Classic

Jennie Richardson, Kentucky's National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) state coordinator, has another world title to her name. Richardson just won the Archery Shooters Association (ASA) Classic, held in Fort Benning, Georgia August 10-12.

The win was Richardson's third during the 2007 season and featured more than 1,100 shooters from all across the US and from England, Kenya and Australia.

Temperatures reached a blazing 105 degrees, with a heat index of 112 degrees as Richardson faced off with twenty other professional women shooters in her class. She was in third place, six points behind the leader after regular-round competition. But the five-target shoot-off was when the competition really heated up.

Richardson moved into second place after the fourth target, then tied for first place after the fifth. From then on, it was between Richardson and Sherry Hott. The two women traded shots for three rounds, each shooting in the 10-ring. Finally, Richardson scored a 12-ring while Hott hit another 10 to claim the tournament crown and \$8,500 in first place money.

"They told me the crowd was going crazy, but I was focused. I just shoot like I'm in the backyard," said Richardson. "But when I hit the 12, then I heard the crowd."

It was a great come-back for Richardson after the International Bowhunting Organization (IBO) World Championship early this month, where she placed well out of the money. "I wasn't prepared for it. I hadn't been practicing," Richardson said. "After the IBO, I had a heart to heart with my coach."

Richardson's coach, Curtis Beverly, put her on a training schedule to prepare for the ASA Classic. It involved shooting



in the middle of the day, getting used to the scorching heat she would encounter in Georgia.

"I worked very early, so I could practice in the middle of the day," said Richardson. In the week leading up to the Classic, she shot from noon to 3:30 in the afternoon – the hottest part of the day. "The 99 to 100 degree weather we're having here in Whitley County helped acclimatize me to the heat," she said.

More than 15 NASP students and their parents participated in the competition as well, in youth and amateur classes. "We had 23 total participants, all who started shooting and then purchased their own compound bows within the last year," Richardson said. "That's what will grow this program. It was a great moment for Fish and Wildlife, for the Department of Education and the NASP program."



## Minor Clark Fish Hatchery gets much needed renovations

Minor Clark Fish Hatchery was built in 1972 and is located in Rowan County, Kentucky on approximately 250 acres adjacent to the Licking River, immediately below Cave Run Lake dam.

The hatchery is a warm-water fish hatchery comprised of 82 one-acre production ponds, 25 1/10th acre production ponds, three large brood fish ponds, and a 13-acre oxbow lake.

Minor Clark Fish Hatchery is the larger of only two state-owned fish hatcheries operated by the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources (KDFWR).

The hatchery produces largemouth bass, muskellunge, walleye (both Lake Erie and native Rockcastle strain), striped bass, white bass, and hybrid striped bass.

In 2004, Minor Clark Fish Hatchery and Peter W. Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery (located in Frankfort, Kentucky) combined to produce almost four million fish that were stocked throughout the lakes, rivers, and reservoirs of Kentucky. Both hatcheries are

essential to the KDFWR in order to meet the fish stocking demands throughout Kentucky's water resources.

Unfortunately, Minor Clark Fish Hatchery is an aging hatchery and necessary renovations and improvements are essential in order to retain and possibly increase current fish production capabilities.

This fall, necessary renovations will take place at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery that will help the hatchery meet current production demands and increase future production capabilities. The renovations include the following:

- (1) Installation of a turbine-type flow meter into the main water supply line.
- (2) Installation of power receptacles to each production pond.
- (3) Replacement of supply and drain lines.
- (4) Lining of some production ponds with a polypropylene fabric.
- (5) Addition of a low pressure sewer design for the entire fish hatchery.
- (6) Valve replacements.
- (7) Addition of a new water loading sta-

tion for hatchery trucks.

- (8) Replacement of cross fittings.
- (9) Installation of a shallow pot (catchment basin) in several production ponds.
- (10) Construction of aeration framing for approximately 60 ponds.
- (11) Additional valve replacement to aid with draining of water supply/drain lines.
- (12) Creation of one larger production pond out of twelve smaller ponds.

Funding for the much needed renovations will be provided in part by a Federal Assistance Grant under the Sport Fish Restoration Program. The estimated cost to complete all the renovations is about \$2 million. Sport Fish Restoration (federal) funds will account for 75 percent of the total cost to complete this work. For more information, please contact Ryan Oster, Program Coordinator at (502)564-7109 x 353.

## Hunter education heats up in August

Kids and adults across Kentucky flock to hunter education courses this time of year. Hunter education instructors are busy making sure this year is a safe one for hunters.

"We have 53 hunter education courses on the schedule for the month of August," said Hunter Education Supervisor Bill Balda. "It's our busiest month. Our first autumn hunting seasons start in August and September."

Instructors teach firearms safety, wildlife identification, hunting ethics, field dressing game and more. There are about 900 volunteer instructors throughout Kentucky. "They give their time because they believe in passing on what they know, being safe while hunting, and carrying on the hunting heritage in Kentucky," Balda said.

September is the second busiest month for hunter education courses. But as fall hunting gets underway, course availability starts dropping off. Fewer courses are taught after September, because volunteer instructors are themselves busy hunting. However, there are hunter education courses taught in every month of the year. A larger number of courses are available again in March, just before spring turkey season.

Balda said participation has not decreased since the new hunter education exemption permit became available July 1. There were 25 courses held in July with 574 participants. Balda doesn't expect to see a decrease in future courses, either.

"We put that in place to bring in people who otherwise would not come," he said. Ninety-two people have purchased an exemption permit so far.

The Information & Education Division welcomes a new Conservation Education Program Leader. Brandon Boone comes to us from Camp Currie where he was a camp councilor supervisor. He joins the department as a full time CEPL assigned to Allen, Logan, Ohio, Todd, Butler, Muhlenberg, Simpson and Warren counties.

The Commissioner's Office welcomes Chad Miles as our department fund raiser. Chad brings with him sales and marketing experience with Brown & Williamson Tobacco and fund raising and conservation education experience with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. He will be working out of our Headquar-

ters office. We will be hearing from Chad in next month's newsletter.

Ten Law Enforcement Division employees and two from Wildlife Division retired July 31.

Retiring from Law Enforcement were Phyllis Dudgeon, Bob Fralick, Mac Warren, Brian Bullock, Dennis Davis, George Hasty, Jeff Abney, Jeff Adams, Chuck Warren and Tom Culton.

Don Walker and Russ Kennedy, of Wildlife Division, also retired.

## Department welcomes new employees



Russ Kennedy (top right photo) received his retirement plaque from Wildlife Director Karen Alexy, Don Walker (right) shows his plaque at a luncheon and Phyllis Dudgeon (above) greeted well wishers during her celebration.





Retired Fish & Wildlife Captain Barth Johnson (right) demonstrates how to set a trap for muskrats causing pond dam damage during a beginners trapping workshop.

## Furbearer trapping included in Strategic Plan

By Laura Patton

With the drop in fur prices in the late 1980s, trapping licenses declined from approximately 7,100 in 1981 to 614 in 1999. However, a renewed interest in trapping over the last few years has reversed the decline, and trapping license sales are steadily increasing.

From 2006 to 2007, the number of trapping licenses increased by 40% to a total of 1,328. Although the pelt value for otters averaged approximately \$100 in 2006, pelt prices were not the sole cause for increased license sales.

On the annual trapper survey, many people reported that they had trapped in the past, and were getting back into the activity for recreation, or their kids were interested in learning how to trap. Trapping provides additional opportunity to get outside during a time of year when other game seasons are closed.

Kentucky's trapping organizations,

United Trappers of Kentucky and Kentucky Furtakers, have been instrumental in the revival of trapping. These groups encourage participation in biannual meetings throughout the state. New and seasoned trappers gather to improve their skills and share experiences.

Trappers demonstrate how to set snares, footholds, and body-gripping traps. Attendees are encouraged to practice skinning, fleshing, and stretching furbearer pelts under the supervision of experts. Children enjoy trap-setting and fleshing competitions.

KDFWR is also actively promoting trapper education. Trapping is part of the department's mission and vision statements along with hunting, fishing, and boating.

Why is trapping receiving attention? Educating hunters and non-hunters about the benefits of regulated trapping is an important component of protecting our

### "Columns," continued

columns by McClellan on choosing the right fishing rod. The Pocono Record also picked up his column on bass fishing at night. The Daily Banner in Maryland, the Chattanooga and the Net Newsledger in Ontario, Canada featured a column by Lynch on boater's fatigue, while Nation's Best Sports Magazine picked up her column on stocking your shooting bag.

The columns aren't the only thing making news outlets take notice. The Outdoor Wire regularly picks up Charlie Baglan's press releases about upcoming "Kentucky Afield" TV episodes, raising awareness about the popular television show. News outlets as far west as California have run Department releases about Kentucky's elk restoration and quota hunts.

Dozens of outlets in the Pacific Northwest published the department's announcement about rising water temperatures and emergency trout fishing and possession regulations on the Cumberland River as well.

The department's recent news release about pink mucket mussels restored in the Green River made the online version of Plenty, a New York environmental magazine. Other news from the department regularly appears in news outlets in Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri.

All of this press is great news for the department, particularly in light of our strategic plan goal of fostering a more informed and involved public. As always, I & E welcomes ideas from department personnel about possible press releases that will help us all accomplish that goal.

hunting and trapping heritage.

Furbearer trapping spurred westward expansion and exploration of North America by early European settlers. Set-

See "Trapping," page 6.

**"Increases," continued**

every week the proposed grade increases. This has included several question/answer sessions, additional justifications, and contacting and encouraging all levels of supervision. Despite these efforts, the process has taken much longer than preferred.

Last week, the Department met with the Personnel Cabinet staff to begin the actual process of upgrading some positions. Based on the meeting, the Personnel Cabinet has approved increasing grades only for the following:

Title Code	Position Title	Current Grade	New Grade
8171	Associate Video Producer I	12	13
8172	Associate Video Producer II	13	14
8180	Fish and Wildlife Information Specialist I	11	12
8181	Fish and Wildlife Information Specialist II	12	13

The other grade increases were not approved by the Personnel Cabinet at this time.

Despite this, I will continue to make sure that our staff works closely with the Personnel Cabinet on future upgrade possibilities. We will work hard to identify and provide additional justifications and even additional changes to all class specifications to support the deserved grade increases.

This will not happen overnight. However, I recognize that competitive salaries help support employee recruitment, retention, morale and productivity.

I will continue to work with both the Commerce Cabinet and Personnel Cabinet to provide competitive salaries and reward employees for their professionalism and hard work.

**"Trapping," continued**

tlers colonized new areas in search of beaver and otter to sell on the European market. Many people trapped furbearers for food, clothing, blankets, and medicines. Leather preservatives, paintbrushes, fishing flies, and perfume all have ingredients which are derived from the hair or glands of furbearers.

Trapping has already been outlawed in some states, which opens the door for hunting and fishing rights to be challenged.

Trappers are the Department's customers. Although revenue generated from trapping license sales is relatively low compared to other license sales, trappers contribute to the Department's funding. The proportion of contributed revenue is not nearly as important as the benefits that are gained by spending the time and resources to promote trapper education.

Trappers in Kentucky have been exceptionally supportive of the Department and associated legislative issues. For example, the support and outcry from trappers to the legislature against allowing the sale of live, wild-caught coyotes in Kentucky was impressive.

Numerous trappers also attended the rally and called legislators to express their support for the conservation easements tax credit bill that would compensate landowners who enter into conservation easements or provide public access to private property for hunting, fishing, and wildlife recreation.

Trapper education has recently been incorporated into the Kentucky Hunter Education Program. Hunter education instructors are teaching sportsmen and



women about the benefits of regulated trapping, as well as safe and ethical trapping practices. The Wildlife Division is now working to collect and distribute donated traps and furbearer pelts to instructors to use in classes.

Trapping has also been promoted through the Kentucky Afield magazine and television show. Trapping was featured in the "Getting Started" segment of the Winter 2005 magazine. In 2006, KY Afield Television aired an excellent piece on trapping as a recreational pastime.

The Wildlife Division is now working on a webpage that will feature trapping and furbearer related information. A highlight will be a site where landowners who are experiencing problems with nuisance furbearers, including livestock depredation by coyotes, fish pond depredation by otters, or beaver damage during the furbearer trapping season, can search in a database for trappers who are looking for trapping opportunities. A list of fur buyers, tanneries, and information about trapping workshops will also be available.

Also in the works is an educational DVD that teaches landowners how to trap nuisance coyotes using snares and foot-hold traps, a beginner trapping guide, and a trapping display in the Salato Wildlife Education Center.



Fisheries Technician Jason McDowell with an Ohio River blue catfish.

## Cat facts from the Ohio River

Catfish in the Ohio River are becoming very popular. They have been a target of commercial fishers for years and are increasingly being sought after by hook and line enthusiasts as well.

It is no wonder that angler interest in catching catfish has increased as this group of fish represent some of the largest fish on Kentucky state record fish list. The state record blue catfish is currently 104 pounds and was caught in the Ohio River.

The state record flathead catfish is a 97-pound fish caught in the Green River. The record channel catfish is a 32-pounder caught in the Ohio River.

Because of their size potential and popularity, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife thought it was time to do a little “fishing” of our own in order to learn more about the life history of these important species.

Doug Henley, the Ohio River Biologist for the Fisheries Division, began

sampling for channel, flathead, and blue catfish in the Ohio River in 2004. The study of these species relied on obtaining fish from sport anglers and using hoop nets, trotlines, and electrofishing. To date, information from nearly 1,000 catfish have been examined in an effort to unlock some of the secrets of catfish age and growth in the Ohio River.

The lengths and weights of catfish are easy enough to gather. However, growth information is more difficult to come by.

Biologists use a small bone inside the cranium of the catfish called an otolith to determine a catfish's age. These bones are sectioned and placed under a microscope to observe small rings that were laid down by the fish as it grew from year to year. These annual rings are quite similar to the rings found in a tree. The fish's age can be determined by counting the number of rings on the otolith.

Information collected on Ohio River

catfish indicates that blue catfish grow the fastest followed by flathead catfish. However, there is considerable variability in fish length and weight for the same age catfish. For example, a 15-year old flathead catfish can range between 26 and 37 inches with weights varying from 8 to 30 pounds. Fifteen year old blue catfish have been found to range from 23 to 44 inches in length with their weights varying from 4 to 51 pounds.

Growth information also tells us that male and female catfish's growth for each of the three species of catfish in the Ohio River is different.

Typically male catfish ultimately grow larger in both length and weight than do females after a certain size. Up until about 34 inches in length or about 20 years of age, male and female flathead catfish grow at similar rates after which growth of males surpasses that of the female flathead catfish.

The oldest male flathead catfish collected to date was a 31-year-old fish that measured 41 inches and weighed approximately 38 pounds while the oldest female flathead collected was 21 years of age, measured 33 inches and weighed approximately 18 pounds.

Similar differences in growth rates for male and female blue catfish are also being observed in the Ohio River. By age 15, male blue catfish (36 inches) begin to out-grow female blue catfish (29 inches). The largest female blue cat collected was 24 years old, measured 33 inches and weighed nearly 15 pounds compared to a 24 year old male that measured 45 inches and weighed just over 50 pounds. Both sexes of channel catfish (oldest age 16 years) seem to grow at similar rates; however males still appear to grow to the longest lengths.

These initial studies on catfish have begun to shed light on the mysteries of catfish age and growth rates in the Ohio River. This information will be used to help ensure that high quality catfish populations continue to exist in the Ohio River for both commercial and sport fishermen for years to come.